

A Deep-water Cowrie from the West Coast.—While working through the Western Australian Museum collection of cowries recently I discovered a specimen which, because of the location given, is of great significance in the zoogeography of its species group. It is one of the pale, whitish, deep-water forms of *Zoila*, and is labelled as having been dredged by the F.I.S. *Endeavour* in 1912 in "60-100 fathoms, between Fremantle and Geraldton." The specimen was placed in the Museum collection by Mr. W. B. Alexander (Cat. No. 4999).

Previously this form had been recorded only from a similar depth in the western section of the Great Australian Bight (see D. L. Serventy, *Journ. Roy. Soc. W.A.*, 23, 1937: 78, for description and illustration). It is considered to be the deep-water form of the South Australian species, *Zoila thersites* (Gaskoin), and Iredale described it as a subspecies, *Z. t. contraria* (*Aust. Zool.*, 8, 1935: 107).
—B. R. WILSON, W.A. Museum, Perth.

Masked Plover in the South-West.—V. N. Serventy and W. H. Butler (*W.A. Nat.*, 5, 1957: 235) record the Spur-winged Plover (*Lobibyx novae-hollandiae*) for the first time in the South-West of W.A. This record is from Lake Muir.

It was much to my surprise when a child brought to school the description of a bird which appeared to be a Spur-winged Plover from Narrikup, 11 miles south of Mt. Barker and 60 miles east of Lake Muir. The description, however, differed in that the bird had a black cap on the head, with no trace of black on the neck or sides of the breast. I investigated the report and the bird proved to be undoubtedly a Masked Plover (*Lobibyx miles*).

The bird was seen on the property of Mr. W. Ford, 7 miles west of Narrikup, on June 6, 1957. It was near a small dam and allowed approach to about 20 yards. Examination was made with a pair of 10 x 50 binoculars and a field sketch was drawn, as reproduced herewith.



The bird was noticeably larger than a Banded Plover (*Zonifer tricolor*), especially in flight and the only black on it was in the form of a cap on the crown. The wings were a similar brown to the Banded Plover, entire underparts white and a yellow wattle on the face was noted. This wattle was not as large as that seen in kodachromes of the Masked Plover from the Kimberleys.

In flight it gave a call bearing resemblance to that of the Banded Plover. It settled in wet pasture and commenced feeding.

The bird remained about a week and then left the farm. It was reported at a nearby lake, where it stayed a short time, then disappeared.

The Spur-winged Plovers reported by Serventy and Butler were also seen at Lake Muir on January 1, 1957, by my wife and myself. The birds were in the paddocks behind the farmhouse, not by the lake as when seen previously. The length of time between this and the previous record indicates that the birds are probably resident in the area.

— ERIC LINDGREN, Mt. Barker.

Black Duck Diving.—While in New Zealand in 1954 I was surprised to observe both Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and ducks, evidently adult Black Duck (*Anas superciliosa*) diving systematically. The position was obscured to some extent by the possibility of the "Black Duck" being Mallard hybrids. However, birds with a prominent supercilial stripe, and to all appearances Black Duck, were observed diving in the same way as Mallard.

The mode of diving is a "duck dive," head first, to the bottom. The ascent is made in the normal swimming position.

Black Duck were observed diving in Pukekura Park, New Plymouth, on April 5. Dives were approximately three seconds' duration in a depth of about two feet of water. Mallard in the Park were observed diving on other occasions. At Lake Mangamahoe, near New Plymouth, several ducks were observed diving, apparently for food, on March 2. In all 50 to 60 ducks were present and these all appeared to be Black Duck.

I could not recall ever having seen Black Duck dive in Australia and several Australian bird-watchers, whom I consulted, agreed that they had not seen this species dive.

However, while at the 1957 Gould League Camp, I watched, on October 15, four young Black Duck diving, apparently for food. These were on the outer margin of the waterside vegetation on the north shore, i.e., in relatively shallow water.

More recently—February, 1958—while taking a rowing boat up a narrow reed-lined channel at Lake Yanchep, my daughter was surprised to see what appeared to be a Black Duck swimming vigorously under water, the wings being used for propulsion. A Black Duck had been preceding the boat up the channel and the bird seen resembled a Black Duck in all particulars. However, the submersion of the bird was not observed, and it did not surface within sight, i.e., it negotiated at least one bend of the channel before surfacing, so that a slight doubt must attach itself to this observation.

Diving in the Mallard appears to be unusual, and the position is summed up in an extract from *The Handbook of British Birds*—Witherby, Jourdain, Ticehurst and Tucker, 1944, vol. 3, p. 232: "Young birds dive for food fairly freely and adults will do so at times; G. C. S. Ingram and H. H. Salmon have observed on a